that the water, brought in motion by the animal, dashed against it, but immediately it disappeared again under water. The head resembled that of a seal, its skin was also as woolly, but the body was as thick and as long as a yacht of fifty tons, and the tail, which seemed to be about thirty-five feet long, tapered towards the end which was as pointed as a boat-hook."

The second account mentioned is in the form of an affidavit by L. Von Ferry and it is of particular interest because of the details it contains. It is probably as representative as any of the tales concerning the great sea monsters.

"In the latter end of August, in the year 1746, as I was on a voyage, on my return from Trundheim, on a very calm and hot day, having a mind to put in at Molde, it happened that when we had arrived with my yacht within a mile of the aforesaid Molde, being at a place called Jule-Naess, as I was reading in a book, I heard a kind of murmuring voice from amongst the men at the oars, who were eight in number, and observed that the man at the helm kept off from the land. Upon this I inquired what was the matter, and was informed that there was a sea-serpent before us. I then ordered the man at the helm to keep the land again, and to come up with this creature of which I had heard so many stories. Though the fellows were under some apprehension, they were obliged to obey my orders. In the meantime the sea-snake passed by us, and we were obliged to tack the vessel about in order to get nearer to it. As the snake swam faster than we could row, I took my gun which was loaded with small shot, and fired at it; on this he immediately plunged under water. We rowed to the place where it sank down (which in the calm might be easily observed) and lay upon our oars, thinking it would come up again to the surface; however it did not. Where the snake plunged down, the water appeared thick and red; perhaps the small shot might have wounded it, the distance being very little. The head of this sea-serpent, which it held more than two feet above the surface of the water, resembled that

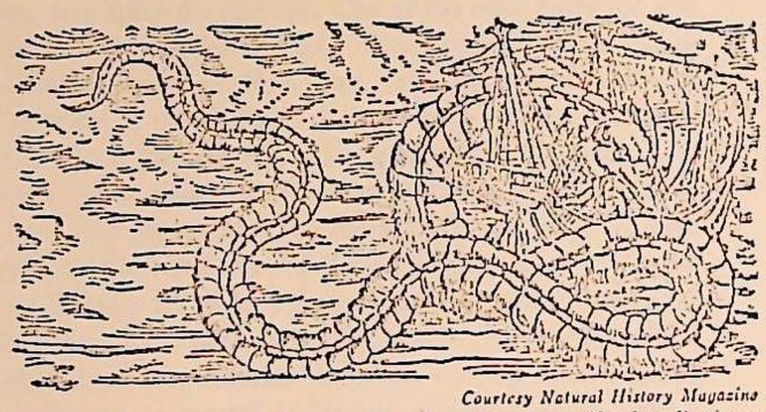
of a horse. It was of a greyish color, and the mouth was quite black, and very large. It had black eyes, and a long white mane, which hung down from the neck to the surface of the water. Besides the head and neck, we saw seven or eight folds, or coils, of this snake, which were very thick, and as far as we could guess there was a fathom's distance between each fold. I related this affair in a certain company, where there was a person of distinction present, who desired that I would communicate to him an authentic detail of all that happened; and for this reason two of my sailors who were present at the same time and place where I saw this monster, namely, Niels Petersen Kopper, and Niels Nielsen Anglewigen, will appear in court, to declare on oath the truth of every particular herein set forth; and I desire the favour of an attested copy of the said descriptions."

Of course sea serpents supposedly exist in all the waters of the world, and Australia has a goodly number of them. Not a year passes but that one or more are reported from the Island continent. It is not often that observers of these strange creatures have the opportunity of approaching them, even though they may possess the desire to do so. But in June, 1930, four men who had been fishing off the Bellambi Reef, on the south east of New South Wales, saw a creature that they described as a sea serpent. It broke water several times and gave the impression of great length. Although amazed and fearful of what might happen to them, they rowed nearer to it and were successful in obtaining a good view of the beast. From their description of its head, which they said resembled the beak of a pelican, Mr. David G. Stead, the outstanding authority on the fishes of Australian waters, concluded that the animal was probably a pike whale, one of the common species occurring along the south shores of Australia. It grows to more than thirty feet, the length given by the fishermen for their "sea serpent."

A few days after the appearance of this creature a second "sea serpent" appeared only a few miles away and was viewed by a

at hand, either that the princes will die or will be banished, or that a war will soon break out."

If we examine in detail other stories of sea serpents we will usually find that they agree in at least some respects with the creature described by Olaus Magnus. This serpent had scales, as the author could not imagine one devoid of them. In the accounts related by the Norse fishermen the skin was usually described as smooth, so that we are able to observe what we may



Courtesy Natural History Magazine

Sea serpents were often pictured as huge creatures capable of swallowing a whole ship. This one, from Olaus Magnus, is shown about to snatch a sailor from his post. It is more snake-like than many of those pictured in ancient works

consider to be the beginning of a cleavage between science and the laity.

In Olaus Magnus' account, several stories are evidently combined into one, as it has been pointed out that the serpent would scarcely go ashore to eat "calves, lambs and hogs" and then make a meal of the sea food. Seals and sea-lions might easily have been mistaken for the reputed serpent as they feed in the way that has been described. The snatching of men from ships is also questionably attributed to this North Sea monster, although Olaus Magnus pictured it devouring a seaman.

Konrad Gesner, of whom much has lately been written because

of the rediscovery of some of the fabulous animals he described in his "nomenclator equatilium animantium," gave greater details of the sea serpents of Scandinavia. Among other things he stated definitely that the Basilisk, the so-called "King of Animals," a crowned serpent, did not exist and he doubted the existence of the mythical dragon. In the sixteenth century, when the ships of Europe were returning from previously unknown lands the continent was flooded with tales of strange monsters and even stranger people. In many instances the accounts were merely exaggerations of popular beliefs long held by the Europeans themselves, but twisted to suit the environment of the newly discovered lands. This resulted in a mixture of fact and fancy and even affected many of the myths of Europe. For example we have Gesner's description (1560) of the sea serpent, a beast he knew only from hearsay.

"In the Baltic or Swedish Ocean are found certain yellow sea-serpents of thirty or forty feet in length, which, when not provoked, do not harm any one. Of these sea-serpents Olaus Magnus gives the following figure in his Map of Scandinavia."

"On the same map there is another sea-serpent, a hundred or two hundred feet long (as says the text, or three hundred, as states the number added to the figure), which sometimes appears near Norway in fine weather, and is dangerous to seamen, as it snatches away men from the ships. Mariners tell that it incloses ships, as large as our trading vessels, made on our rivers and lakes, by laying itself round them in a circle, and that the ship then is turned upside down. It sometimes makes such large coils above the water, that a ship can go through one of them. I give the figure as it is on the map."

Another account of a Scandinavian sea serpent was given by Pontoppidan about 1745 while a more detailed account was published a few years later. The former is as follows: "A fisherman relates to me that, on Sundsland, two miles from Bergen, he once saw a long, large and strange animal so close to his boat,

one that had Broadway gasping and gaping something less than a century ago. We refer to the skeleton exhibited by Dr. Albert C. Koch, on Broadway in the year 1845 under the scientific name *Hydrarchus sillimanni*. It was a complete skeleton as far as appearances go, but it had its defects. These, however, were not discovered until after the animal had been noted and described in many scientific journals and newspapers. Dr. Koch was evidently a good showman and despite the criticism that quickly appeared, continued to display the skeleton. One of the most emphatic and convincing of the articles exposing Koch appeared in the "Illustrated London News" of November, 1848, three years after the first exhibition of the skeleton. It is an enlightening document written by G. A. Mantell, a ranking geologist of the times.

"Sir,—Will you allow me to correct a statement that appeared in the last Number of your interesting publication? The fossil mentioned at the conclusion of the admirable notice of the so-called Sea-Serpent, as having been exhibited in America under the name of *Hydrarchus Sillimanni*, was constructed by the exhibitor Koch, from bones collected in various parts of Alabama, and which belonged to several individual skeletons of an extinct marine cetacean, termed *Basilosaurus* by the American naturalists, and better known in this country by that of *Zeuglodon*, a term signifying yoked teeth. Mr. Koch is the person who, a few years ago, had a fine collection of fossil bones of elephants and mastodons, out of which he made up an enormous skeleton, and exhibited it in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, under the name of *Missourium*. This collection was purchased by the trustees of the British Museum, and from it were selected the bones which now constitute the matchless skeleton of a Mastodon in our National Gallery of Organic Remains.

"Not content with the interest which the fossils which he collected in various parts of the United States really possess, Mr. Koch, with the view of exciting the curiosity of the ignorant multitude, strung together all the vertebrae he could obtain of

the *Basilosaurus*, and arranged them in a serpentine form; manufactured a skull and claws, and exhibited the monster as a fossil Sea-Serpent, under the name above mentioned—*Hydrarchus*. But the trick was immediately exposed by the American naturalists, and the true nature of the fossil bones pointed out.

"Bones of the *Basilosaurus* have been found in many parts of Alabama and South Carolina, in green sand belonging to a very ancient (Eocene) tertiary formation. Hundreds of vertebrae, bones of the extremities, portions of the cranium, and of the jaws with teeth, have from time to time been collected. Remains of species of the same genus have also been found near Bordeaux and in Malta.

"Professor Owen has shown that the original animal was a marine cetacean, holding an intermediate place between the Cachelots and the herbivorous species. It must have attained a length equal to that of the largest living whales; for a series of vertebrae was observed in situ, that extended in a line sixty-five feet."

Among the better known of the early sea serpents is that described by Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsala, who wrote in 1555 as follows:

"They who, either to trade or to fish, sail along the shores of Norway, relate with concurring evidence a truly admirable story, namely that a very large serpent of a length of upwards of 200 feet, and 20 feet in diameter lives in rocks and holes near the shore of Bergen; it comes out of its caverns only on summer nights and in fine weather to devour calves, lambs and hogs, or goes into the sea to eat cuttles, lobsters and all kinds of sea-crabs. It has a row of hairs of two feet in length, hanging from the neck, sharp scales of a dark colour, and brilliant flaming eyes. It attacks boats and snatches away the men, by raising itself high out of the water, and devours them: and commonly this does not happen without a terrible event in the Kingdom, without a change being

Mr. Edward Newman, the Editor of the Zoölogist, adds:

"It is impossible for any story to read more like a hoax than this, but I had ready means of procuring, through a friend at Lloyd's, the information that there is such a ship as the 'British Banner,' that she is commanded by Mr. William Taylor, a respectable and trustworthy gentleman, and that she did arrive at Liverpool on Sunday, March 18 last past, and is now in the Albert Dock. Armed with this information I wrote to Captain Taylor, who has replied in the most courteous manner; he confirms the above statement, adding that he sent it to the 'Daily Post' himself, and adding also that the young one reported to have been caught was presented to the Museum at Melbourne, where it was thoroughly inspected and pronounced to be a veritable sea-serpent."

If the Editor of the Zoölogist took Captain Taylor's "Sea Serpent" seriously, Mr. George Guyon, of the Isle of Wight, did not, for he submitted the following poem which was duly published:

"I've a story to tell—I don't say that it's true—
But just as I heard it I tell it to you.

"A ship there was sailing upon the blue sea
With her canvas all set, when the captain, said he

"'I feel that the vessel is all of a tremble,
A sort of sea earthquake it seems to resemble;

"Send forward the mate to see what is the matter.'
When lo! what he saw would have made your teeth chatter,

"An enormous big snake rising out of the sea,
Some three hundred feet long it might possibly be,

"And in bulk it might equal a 'wide crinoline'
(At least seven yards round that description must mean).

"With jaws eight feet long, and with eyes fiercely glaring,
A horn and a mane; he looked horribly daring,

"While the bowsprit he shook in his terrible mouth.
'Twas in Latitude east and in Longitude south,

"This is somewhat obscure, but I think on the whole
It occurred th' other side of the Antarctic pole,

"The ship making six knots—leaving foam in her wake,
Yet she stopped at the touch of this wonderful snake;

"And the Jibboom and bowsprit were snapped like a straw;
But his strength was outdone by his marvellous maw;

"For he swallowed the stay-sail and also the jib,
Like a boy gulping oysters—they went down too glib.

"With his stay to his stomach he turned him about,
And gave with his tail such a vigorous flout,

"That some timbers to atoms were crushed by the blow,
And what more might have happened we none of us know,

"When an object appeared for the which he set sail,
And both object and story were much like a whale."

The incident is closed by the following terse announcement by the Editor of the same journal.

"Captain Taylor's Sea-Serpent.—A friend, who has the opportunity of communicating with Melbourne on the subject of the young sea-serpent which Captain Taylor says (Zoöl. 6985) he presented to the Museum at Melbourne, has ascertained through Mr. Coates, of that town, that Captain Taylor is so far correct, that he did at the time specified present a specimen of Pelamys bicolor to the Museum in question, and Professor M'Coy exhibited the same to Mr. Coates. Of course there is no rational ground for concluding that this small sea snake is the young of any such gigantic creature as Captain Taylor has described.—Edward Newman."

We cannot dismiss the sea serpent hoaxes without referring to

ually swells to a diameter of two feet in the centre, giving about six feet girth; it then tapers off towards the tail, and ends in a fin, which can expand in fan-shape three feet across, or close in a sheath. Double rows of fins are alternately placed along the belly. The head is most singular. The eyes are large, staring and terrific, with a transparent membrane attached to the lids, protecting the eye without impeding the vision. No gills appear. The mouth is like that of the fish called a sucker; it can stretch so as to swallow a body a foot and a half in diameter: there are no teeth; a bony substance, extending in two parallel lines, covers the upper and lower part of the head. The sides and back are dusky brown; the belly is dirty white. Although sinuous like a snake, there are hard knot-like substances along the back. The harpoon is still in him. He lies in the water, confined with ropes, which keep his body in a curve, so that he cannot get away. He can use his head and tail, with which he stirs the water all around. When he rears his head (which he generally keeps under water) he presents a fearful aspect. In expanding his mouth he exhibits a blood-red cavity, horrible to look at, and the air rushes forth with a heavy short puff."

So authentic did this announcement appear that it was reproduced in the "Zoölogist" (London) in the same year and the story might have continued to be credited by the scientific world but for a communication from Washington. In his letter to the "Zoölogist" Mr. Spencer F. Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution wrote:

"You have probably since learned that the account is an unmitigated hoax, manufactured by a newspaper-editor while on a summer vacation, for the purpose of furnishing material for his editorial correspondence." It was just five years later, 1860, that the "Zoölogist" published another sea serpent story that was equally fabulous, and again science came to the rescue. The tale is an interesting one and bears repeating here.

"The following extract from the log of the 'British Banner,'

which arrived at Liverpool on Sunday, March 18 last, appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post of March 20: 'On the twenty-fifth of April, in lat. 12° 7′ East and longitude 93° 52′ South, felt a strong sensation as if the ship were trembling. Sent second mate to see what was up; the latter called out to me to go up the fore rigging and look over the bows. I did so, and saw an enormous serpent shaking the bowsprit with his mouth. There was about thirty feet of the serpent out of the water, and I could see in the water abaft of our stern; must have been at least three hundred feet long; was about the circumference of a very wide crinoline petticoat, with black back, shaggy mane, horn on his forehead, and large glaring eyes, placed rather near the nose, and jaws about eight feet long; he did not observe me, and continued to shake the bowsprit and to throw the sea alongside into a foam, until the former came clear away of the ship. The serpent was powerful enough, although the ship was carrying all sail, and going at about six knots at the time he attacked us, to stop her way completely. When the bowsprit with the jibboom sails and rigging went by the board, the monster swallowed the foretop-mast staysail and flying jib, with the greatest apparent ease; he also snapped the thickest of the rigging asunder like thread. He sheered off a little after this, and returned apparently to scratch himself against the side of the ship, making a most extraordinary noise, resembling that on board a steamer when the boilers are blowing off. A whale breached within a mile of the ship at this time, and the serpent darted off after it like a flash of lightning, striking the vessel with his tail, and staving in all the starboard quarter galley. Saw no more of it, but caught a young one in the afternoon, and brought it on to Melbourne.—William Taylor, Master, 'British Banner.'

"(The British Banner arrived here on Sunday, and is now in the Albert Dock. Captain Taylor declares that the above statement is perfectly correct.—Editor Daily Post.)"

head was raised high above the water and when he shook his head water sprayed from his mane. They recovered from their shock and paddled frantically in an effort to escape. The chase continued for more than half a mile before the serpent, with a snort of disgust, dived below the surface and disappeared. Whatever the truth of this story, the two Indians actually arrived in Orillia in a very shaky condition and with very pale faces, and they refused to return to Rama by canoe that night.

We might have considered the condition of the men excellent evidence that they had undergone some terrifying experience if we had not had further acquaintance with some of their tribesmen during the war. In view of our later knowledge, we have long been convinced that their exhaustion was due to the fact that they had paddled strenuously over most of the distance from Rama in order to reach Orillia while the stores were still open. As we later learned these Indians have the power of assuming a deceptive appearance of extreme fatigue or illness whenever they may gain anything by doing so.

The Couchiching sea serpent is undoubtedly a figment of the imagination. Probably it originated from Indian mythology, although we have not heard stories of the Great Serpent (as related in tales of Gluskap) told by any of the Rama residents.

One of the most famous sea serpent stories originated in the fertile mind of a New York newspaper man. This is one instance in which eye witnesses actually saw the monster and their statements were entirely true, because the serpent did appear and it remained in clear view for some time. It was a really fine practical joke. The sea serpent was constructed by the newspaper man in his summer home. A wire was run from the shore to a submerged anchorage, and the sea serpent was fastened to the end in the water under cover of darkness. By tightening the wire the "monster" was drawn beneath the surface. At an appropriate time it was permitted to come to the surface before witnesses, and a furor of excitement and publicity followed. Newspaper reporters

rushed to the scene and the telegraph flashed the news around the world. The head and neck of the "serpent" appeared above the surface of the water, swaying slightly from the action of the waves. From all descriptions it must have been a very baleful looking creature. The secret of the "serpent's" origin was finally released, but this created no such sensation as its original appearance. Many sea serpent hoaxes have been quickly exposed. On August 13, 1855, the "Buffalo Daily Republic" announced the capture of the great American water-snake in Silver Lake, near Perry Village, New York.

"On Sunday, the 12th, the snake came to the surface displaying a length of thirty feet. On Monday morning all were on the alert. At nine o'clock he appeared between the whaleman's boat and the shore: he lay quiescent on the surface, and the whaleman's boat moved slowly towards him, Mr. Smith, of Covington, pointing his patent harpoon. On reaching within ten feet of the snake, the iron whistled in the air, and he darted off towards the upper part of the lake, almost dragging the boat under water by his movement. Line was given him, and in half an hour his strength seemed much exhausted. The whaleman then went ashore and gradually hauled the line in. When within fifty feet of the shore, the snake showed renewed life, and with one dart nearly carried off the whale line, but he was dragged slowly ashore amid excitement unexampled in the district. Four or five ladies fainted on seeing the snake, who although ashore, lashed his body into tremendous folds, and then straightened himself out in agony with a noise that made the earth tremble. The harpoon had penetrated a thick muscular part, eight feet from his head. He is fifty-nine feet eight inches in length, and has a most disgusting look. A slime a quarter of an inch thick covers his body, and if removed is instantly replaced by exudation. The body is variable in size. The head is the size of a full grown calf. Within eight feet from the head the neck gradually swells to the thickness of a foot in diameter; it then tapers down, and again grad-

been practically unknown. Today Loch Ness is as well known, by name at least, as Piccadilly, the Strand or Broadway, and the notoriety that was attached to the discovery of the strange monster has resulted in a great influx of tourists and much business for the canny Scottish folk who inhabit its shores.

There have been two explanations of the identity of the Loch Ness monster. One is that it was nothing more or less than a seal, the other that it might have been a killer whale. There is no absolute proof of its identity, but the conclusion that it was a seal, reached by Mr. Hinton, keeper of mammals at the British Museum of Natural History, may be accepted without reservation. The assertion of Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews, of the American Museum of Natural History, that the photograph submitted to him resembled in appearance the dorsal fin of a killer whale offers another possibility.

Unfortunately the scientific explanation of sea serpents is not nearly so exciting as the news of their discovery. In comparison to the serpent itself, the animal responsible for the news flash is usually a very mundane creature and the scientist who exposes it is of much less importance than the person who first saw it. We do not wish to give the impression that scientists are always trying to take the joy and thrills out of the lives of those who make phenomenal discoveries. The opposite is really true. No scientist living could find greater pleasure than in the discovery of a sea serpent. He would be eminently more satisfied by the receipt of a sea serpent than of any other animal, and he would consider it a great honor to be able to announce that he had at last found a real one.

Sea serpents date as far back as our history goes and many of the fables concerning them probably were handed down from prehistoric times. They owe their origin to some incident that could not be properly explained by our ancestors and, as a result, they took on supernatural significance and became associated with the gods of mythology. Despite the old stories some of the re-

cently discovered sea serpents are more interesting. There is "Old Faithful," that sportive inhabitant of the Pacific, that pays an annual visit to the waters separating Vancouver, British Columbia, from Vancouver Island. Old Faithful got his name because of the regularity with which he has appeared. Just how long he has been putting in an appearance we do not know, but it has been a great many years; if memory serves us rightly, since shortly after the beginning of the present century.

British Columbia had another sea serpent which was once quite active but which has not been seen for some years. This serpent first attracted attention when the apple growing industry was at its zenith in the Okanagan Valley. The "snake" appeared in Okanagan one summer and drew a great deal of attention to that region. It was a most obliging animal because it appeared several times that year and was seen by a large number of people. For several years following it was reported almost annually. Speculation linked it up with Vancouver's Old Faithful but the connection was never proved.

The Lake Couchiching sea serpent must be more than thirty years old if he is still living, for he first came to our notice more than thirty years ago and he was a very sizable creature at that time. The residents of the town of Orillia have long been anxious to capture him, and we know of at least one expedition that set out with this purpose in mind. However, he has not put in an appearance since the beginning of the World War. Shortly before that time it was reported that he frightened two Indian residents of the reservation at Rama almost to death. According to the story related by these braves, they started out from Rama in the late afternoon to paddle the three miles to Orillia. They had covered more than half the distance and had passed Grape Island when they heard a furious commotion in the water behind them. Looking back such a horrible sight met their eyes that they were terrified into immobility. Glaring at them with burning, baleful eyes was the huge sea serpent. His horse-like

they are seldom seen, but when the sea becomes rough and choppy they are usually much in evidence, the sea appearing to be alive with them.

From an examination of the stomach contents it has been found that certain species show a preference for members of the catfish family. Anandale, who has spent the greater part of his life in India, and whose studies of the sea snakes have been very extensive, states that the spines of these fish are worked out through the body wall of the snake during the process of digestion. It is difficult to understand how the snake could survive the puncturing of the stomach and body wall, but apparently it is able to do so.

Various forms of animal and plant life frequently attach themselves to sea snakes. They are often found literally covered with sea weed and barnacles. These organisms are not parasitic, since they do not injure the snake in any way unless their presence impedes its progress through the water. When present in number they do, of course, more or less conceal the ground color of their host, but it is not likely that they make the snake more conspicuous. The presence of seaweed on the snakes should aid concealment. The snakes are not always on the move but wrap themselves about any convenient objects such as seaweed, anchor chains, etc. It is while they are resting that the young of the barnacles settle upon them, as they do upon any hard object with which they come in contact.

Man cannot be considered inimical to sea snakes but they are not without their enemies. Sea eagles snatch them from the surf and fly with them to a convenient perch where they tear them apart, warding off by means of beating wings any attempts of the snake at self-defence. It is also likely that they are eaten by other large sea birds and fish.

The sea snakes belonging to the group known scientifically as the *Laticaudinae* differ considerably from other marine snakes. They resemble land snakes in having broad ventral shields.

Through use of these they are able to travel on land and are far from helpless when brought up in fish nets. They have been seen leaving the sea and crawling up on the rocks in native villages where fish are being dried in the sun. When disturbed they drop to the ground and quickly make their way to the water.

The snakes of this group are egg-layers, going up on land to find a suitable place in which to deposit the eggs. Both the egg-laying habit and the presence of the ventral shields are primitive conditions, and both may be considered as a hindrance to a strictly marine existence. They indicate clearly that this group represents a transitional stage between the terrestrial elapines and the strictly pelagic forms.

The breeding season is probably spread over the entire year, but too little is known for us to be at all definite on this point. Wall has observed that certain species double their length in a single year and others become fully mature in this space of time. These, however, are not as prolific as some of the others, giving birth to as few as two or three young at a time. The young develop within the female, the mature embryos being enclosed in membranous sacs, as in other ovoviviparous snakes.

Although there is no evidence that "Sea Serpents" actually exist, these fabulous creatures must receive considerable attention in any book dealing with the habits of snakes. Some of these reputed reptiles obviously could not have been snakes because they were described as having smooth, slimy skins. Despite this we shall consider them along with the rest of the mythical creatures that have so excited the minds of scientists with doubt and of laymen with wonder and awe. The duty of the scientist is to determine the identity of all sea serpents, and in these days, with rapid transportation and telephotos, any mystery that might surround the identity of the serpent of the moment is quickly cleared up. As an example of this we have only to consider the Loch Ness monster that a few years ago focussed the attention of the whole world on a tiny area, the existence of which had

or struggle in a most futile manner. This helplessness is not entirely due to the shape of the body but is accounted for in great part by the type of scalation. The large ventral scutes that provide the means of locomotion in land snakes are absent in all but one group of sea snakes, being replaced by scales. The scales, which do not overlap, are usually small and are provided with keels that may be produced into spines and tubercles.

Some of the species are enormously enlarged on the posterior part of the body where the girth may be four or five times that of the small anterior part and head. An arrangement of this sort naturally enables the stomach to hold large prey. Such species are known to exist chiefly on eels.

The sea snakes have two general types of color pattern. The commonest is a greenish-gray ground color crossed by black or dark brown bands that generally entirely encircle the body. The second type has a dorsal coloration of black or dark brown that changes abruptly to yellow or yellowish-white below, the tail being pale with dark markings above. Both types of coloration are protective. The camouflaging of ships during the world war was based upon the same principle that nature has employed for millions of years—the breaking up of solid colors in order to conceal the outline of an object when viewed from a distance. This same principle is further illustrated by the markings of the strongly banded water snakes and many other animals, and it is surprising how efficient it proves as a method of concealment. The dark dorsal and pale ventral coloration is extremely common in the animal kingdom and is also seen in birds. The difficulty of locating shore birds while they are still is well known to all bird lovers, the color combination breaking up the ventral shadow and literally cutting the bird in half from a visual point of view, so that the shape is deceptive. A uniformly colored snake or bird is much more easily seen than a bicolored one, a fact that can be quickly proven during almost any stroll through the country.

Sea snakes are equipped with fangs on the front of the upper jaw, as cobras are. There has been little experimentation with their poison but it is known to be many times more toxic than the cobra's and to have a neurotoxic reaction that is particularly effective on cold-blooded animals. This is to be expected, inasmuch as eels and other fish comprise their diet.

Sea snakes do not have a bad reputation as regards their relationship to man. They are principally dangerous to bathers during or after a storm. During the monsoons they are washed ashore in large numbers, the mangrove swamps sometimes swarming with them following a particularly heavy storm. It is then that they constitute the greatest danger. In their frantic attempts to prevent themselves from being washed ashore as they are buffeted about in the surf, they grasp anything that comes their way, sinking their teeth in and hanging on desperately. If they should get hold of a human being the result would probably be fatal. So far as we know there have been no scientific observations made of the effect of sea-snake venom on humans but there are records of deaths. We have an unconfirmed report of the death of a German investigator off the coast of Panama many years ago but have been unable to secure details. No other death in American waters has come to our notice.

In regions where sea snakes are numerous the native fishermen hold them in great contempt, picking them up and tossing them back into the sea without any thought of danger. Almost every cast of nets results in the capture of numbers of sea snakes, which are quickly disposed of in the way described. In view of the large numbers encountered by the fishermen in sorting their catch it seems remarkable that so few bites result. Wall, watching some fishermen who were using lines, noticed with considerable amusement that *Enhydrina schistosa*, one of the common sea snakes in those waters, took the bait more frequently than fish.

Travelers in the tropical waters of the orient may sometimes see these snakes in almost countless numbers. During calm weather

CHAPTER XIV

SEA SNAKES AND SEA SERPENTS

IT MAY seem odd that any snakes should have taken up a strictly marine existence, especially if we consider the fact that their distant ancestors came originally from the sea in order to seek a less crowded domain and fresh supplies of food. But, like other groups of animals, certain of them, again in search of food, have returned to the environment in which primitive life began, because there they could find food in abundance. In order to understand this seeming paradox it is necessary to remember that the reptilian ancestors which crawled from the water were very different from snakes and that the world was still uninhabited by present day mammals, birds and reptiles, all of which are descended from the same ancestral stock. Almost all mammals can swim naturally, but they must be looked upon as mere novices when compared to snakes. Because of their build and flexible spinal column snakes are admirably adapted for swimming. It is not at all strange, then, that many kinds are found in the ocean and never come to dry land.

Sea snakes themselves are derived directly from the cobras and their allies (*Elapidae*), but they have undergone so much modification that they are placed in the family *Hydrophiidae* (meaning water snake). As is to be expected because of their relationship to the cobras, all are poisonous. Some of them are beautifully colored and resemble certain eels so closely that they have actually been confused by some scientific workers.

At the present time the sea snakes are limited to tropical waters extending from America to Asia and Africa, but there is a pos-

sibility that they may eventually find their way into the Atlantic ocean. Up until the time of the opening of the Panama Canal the range of these snakes was definitely limited by the cold waters to the north and south and the barriers provided by the great land masses, so that there was no possibility of their rounding the tips of the continents in the south or gaining entrance through the Mediterranean. However, man may have provided the necessary access to the Atlantic by the building of the Panama Canal. It is scarcely necessary to go into details regarding the means by which the snakes could find their way into the Atlantic. Perhaps they never shall. There are two barriers to their becoming established east of the American Continent. To do so they must pass through the canal in sufficiently large numbers to breed without interruption. Furthermore, the large body of fresh water constituting Gatun Lake, through which they would have to pass before reaching the salt water of the Atlantic, may be a barrier. We cannot be certain that this is an actual barrier because sea snakes have been found a hundred miles up tidal streams where the amount of salt in the water must be extremely small. Gatun Lake, of course, is entirely fresh water.

All of the fifty or more sea snakes are powerful swimmers, their tails being vertically flattened and providing perfect paddles for propulsion through the water. It is not known just how long they can remain submerged, but reliable investigations indicate a period of at least eight hours. Since they breathe free air, as do all other snakes, the nostrils are modified so that they may be closed, thus preventing the entrance of water into the lungs when the snake dives beneath the surface. Since the lung is large and provided with a storage space for air, and respiration is slow, the snakes are able to remain submerged for long periods of time without discomfort.

On land most of these snakes are helpless. Their body is usually gently arched so that the dorsal length is greater than the ventral. As a result, when brought to land they lie helplessly on their sides

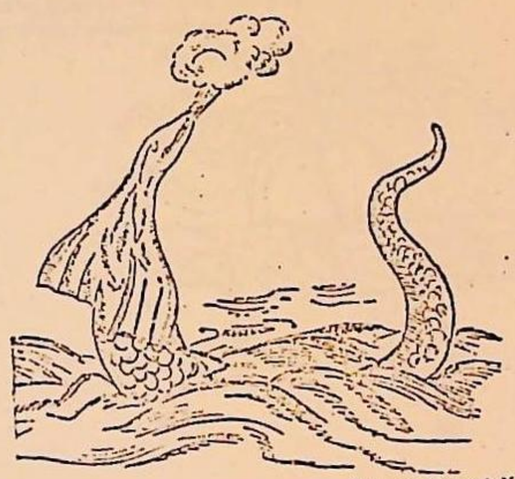
number of people, all of whom were able to give clear accounts of it. The animal, they said, was about eighty feet long. It seemed to be traveling very leisurely with an undulating motion toward Bellambi Reef, its huge shining back head rising in the air and disappearing, giving the impression that it was feeding. From time to time the head shot upward at the end of a long, serpent-like neck.

Once more we take the identification of this creature from the records of Mr. Stead. He says that the descriptions were sufficiently clear to identify the animal as a great calamary, cuttlefish or giant sea squid, called "Polypus" in many of the old accounts. These animals are huge molluscs and are distantly related to the octopus, differing in that they have an extra pair of tentacles (ten instead of eight), the sucking discs of which are located on large, broadened pads at the end of the extra pair of enormously long arms. The natural habitat of these great calamaries is the ocean depths where they are believed to exist in enormous numbers. Occasionally one comes to the surface and is apparently unable to return to its normal haunts because its body becomes inflated by gases when the pressure of the ocean depths is released.

The great calamaries are the prey and the enemy of the mighty sperm whale, since they form the only food of these huge cetaceans. But, as is often the case with predacious animals, the sperm whale is not always able to overcome its intended victim and is sometimes killed by a calamary. Before explaining how this is accomplished let us first consider the Noumea sea serpent.

The Noumea, New Caledonia, sea serpent came into prominence only a few years ago. It was first sighted on September 22 by two native women who were crossing a bay about eight miles from Noumea, their attention being attracted to it by a terrific detonation. Turning around they saw the weird creature about eighty yards off. It whistled for some seconds and blew to a great

height a jet of smoke and then a torrent of water. It made a heavy swell and splashed on the sea with a tremendous noise. When it lifted its head and tail out of the water they were able to observe that the back of its head was clothed with long hair. Later they sighted it going in the direction of Noumea harbor. On September 30 it was again observed, this time about two miles from Noumea harbor. In this description it is said to have thrown its body out of the water "like a mast."

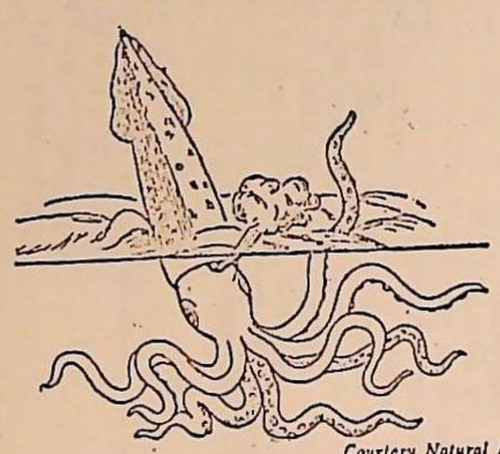


Courtesy Natural History Magazine
Hans Egede's sea serpent as he described it in 1734, is shown above

While there is always room for doubt, and arguments against it might be convincing, it seems most probable that the Caledonian women observed a battle between a whale and a great calamary. Since whales must come to the surface to breathe they are at a disadvantage when attacked by one of the huge molluscs. If the calamary succeeds in covering the whale's single blow hole with the pads on one of his long arms or is able to fasten himself over it, a terrific struggle ensues when the whale comes up for air. If in this case the hole was only partly covered, the jet of smoke seen by the women was probably water blown by the

whale and colored black by an inky substance secreted by the calamary. The breaching of the whale with the attendant impact of its heavy body on the surface of the water would account for the terrific noise they heard, while the "hair" on the serpent's neck may have been the calamary's tentacles. The second sea serpent near Noumea might have been a great calamary, possibly the same one that had attacked the whale.

It is easy to understand how these giant molluscs are mistaken for sea serpents. They grow to great length—a hundred feet or



Courtesy Natural History Magazine
It is easy to see the similarity between this drawing of a giant squid and Egede's sea serpent. There is no doubt that these molluscs have often been mistaken for the fabulous monsters of the deep

more, if we include the long arms. The sucker discs on the ends of the arms vary in shape in the different species. They may be triangular, oval, or more or less round. The suckers are located on the tough stalks and are sometimes armed with retractile claws. The prey is grasped by the long arms and dragged toward the mouth until all the tenacles are able to come into play. When they swim the calamaries move backwards through the water with great speed. If they happen to be at the surface, the tail,

which also varies in shape in the different kinds, bobs in and out of the water, while the long arms move with an undulating motion.

Some scientists explain all the "great sea serpents" by the single word "calamary." This is not sufficient explanation, but it is undoubtedly true that a great many of the hundreds of reputed sea serpents were actually calamaries. But there are many other explanations. Whales, dolphins, sharks, floating sea weed, seals and numerous other denizens of the deep have all been mistaken for the "great sea serpent." We might add that lines of sea birds are also thought to have given rise to sea serpent stories.

Snakes and their Ways

© 1937 by Harper & Brothers - N.Y.
printed in U.S. second edition
by Charles Howard Curran - Dept of
Entomology - American Museum
of Natural History and
Carl Kauffeld - curator of reptiles
Staten Island Zoological Society -

biggest fossil snakes *Gigantophis* and *Madtsoia* did not exceed 10–11 m *33–36 ft*. Unfortunately many people often forget that all animals must live within the laws of physics and chemistry, and the height of absurdity was reached in February 1980 when an Indonesian newspaper carried the following item:

'A giant python was crushed by a bulldozer at a forest project in N Bengkulu, SW Sumatra. The snake contained four human corpses, two of which appeared to have been recently devoured as they were still in their shorts and trousers. The operator of the bulldozer battled for over an hour with the two mammoth snakes, each reported to be about 25 metres (82·5 ft) long, before one snake was killed and the other escaped. Larger snakes have been reported.'

The largely aquatic anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*) of the swamps, lakes and slow-moving rivers of tropical South America and Trinidad has also been credited with the title of 'longest snake in the world' but although it is the heaviest of the giant serpents – a 17 ft *5·2 m* anaconda will scale as much as a 24 ft *7·3 m* reticulated python – great bulk can often be misleading when it comes to estimating length.

To prove this point A Hyatt Verrill (1937) once asked the other members of an animal-collecting expedition he was leading in Guyana to estimate the length of an anaconda they had spotted curled up on a rock. The estimates varied from 20 ft *6·1 m* to 60 ft *18·3 m*, but when the snake was shot and straightened out it was found to measure exactly 19 ft 6 in *5·9 m*, although it was exceptionally bulky and scaled 360 lb *163 kg*.

Also complicating the issue is the fact that the anaconda has probably been the subject of more exaggerated claims regarding its size than any other living animal. The early Spanish settlers called it 'matatora' (bull-killer) and spoke of individuals measuring 60–80 ft *18–24 m*, but even larger snakes have been reported.

In January 1948, for instance, a 'sucuriju gigante' (giant boa) measuring 40 m *131 ft* in length and weighing an estimated 5 tonnes was allegedly captured *alive* after a band of Indians found it sleeping off a heavy meal on the banks of the Amazon. The snake was later towed to Manaos, W Brazil by river tug where it was the object of some curiosity until its life was snuffed out by a burst of machine-gun fire (Dinsdale, 1965). Later the same year another one measuring 35 m *115 ft* was reportedly killed at Fort Abunda in the Guapore District, SW Brazil after it had crawled into the old fortifications (Heuvelmans, 1958), and in 1954 a length of 36 m *118 ft* was quoted for another serpentine colossus shot by a Brazilian army patrol at Amapa on the French Guiana border (Gregor, 1962). Needless to say nothing was preserved of any of these outsized individuals, and two published photographs were valueless because no yardsticks were given.

Fortunately some of the early explorers and naturalists who visited South America were much more critical in their accounts of this giant snake. Capt. G Stedman (1796), for example, who travelled extensively in the Guianas between 1772 and 1777, said the largest anaconda killed by him measured 22 ft 4 in *6·8 m*. Sir Robert Schomburgk (1847–48), the German explorer, collected one in British Guiana which measured exactly *18 ft 5·49 m*, and Alfred Wallace (1853), who explored large parts of Amazonia, wrote that he never saw an anaconda over 20 ft *6·1 m*, although he was told by his native bearers that they were sometimes 60–80 ft *18–24 m*.

Nicholas Guppy (1963) collected an anaconda in the Yampari River, Guyana which measured 17 ft 3 in *5·26 m* and had a maximum girth of 28 in *71 cm* (it had just constricted an 8 ft *2·4 m* alligator), and on another occasion he shot a much larger example on the banks of the Kassikaityu River in the extreme south of that country. Unfortunately this one fell into very deep water and could not be recovered, but Guppy and the rest of his party all agreed that the snake must have been at least 27 ft *8·2 m* long.

Many extreme measurements have been based on the lengths of skins, but these records are unreliable. It is virtually impossible to remove the skin of a snake without stretching it by at least 10 per cent, and in the case of the anaconda and other heavy snakes the skin can be *deliberately stretched* without causing much distortion to the markings by 30 per cent or more.

The American Consul at Iquitos, Peru told Leonard Clark, the American explorer, that many of the anaconda skins brought to the city by traders each year measured 40 ft *12·2 m*, and Thomas Barbour claims he saw a 45 ft *13·7 m* skin (Perry, 1970).

In the 1920s Raymond L Ditmars, Curator of Reptiles at New York Zoological Park personally offered $1000 to anyone who could supply him with an anaconda skin measuring over 40 ft *12·2 m*, but the money was never claimed.

One of the longest anacondas ever captured was a tremendously bulky individual shot by W L Schurz (1907) in Brazil which measured 27 ft 9 in *8·46 m* in length and had a maximum girth of 44 in *1·12 m*. Its weight was not recorded, but a snake of these dimensions would probably scale about 450 lb *204 kg*. Clark collected another one near Iquitos which taped 26 ft 9 in *8·15 m*, and an anaconda measuring 26 ft 3 in *8·00 m* was killed in Pernambuco State, E Brazil in 1948. A 26 ft *7·9 m* female shot in Nariva Swamp, Trinidad contained a 5 ft *1·5 m* alligator in her stomach (Oliver, 1963), while the 10 m *32 ft 10 in* skin

WOOD (Gerald L.): The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats (Enfield, Guinness Superlatives Ltd, 3rd ed., 1982) [p. 107]

Beauty Has Fangs

By Kenneth J. Stairs

I worked my way up the rocky hillside in southern Somerset County in search of the timber rattlesnake. The temperature had only gone down to 63F the night before and at 8:45 this morning was already 70F and rising steadily. The hot sun was taking its toll causing me to wipe my brow. My legs were sweating within the confines of my 17 inch high leather snake proof boots. The steepness of the hill didn't help matters either, I knew that the hot sun would also mean that the snakes would soon seek the shade and protection of the rocks and bushes. Snakes have no way of retaining body heat and must depend on the sun to keep them warm, but too much sun would cause them to become uncomfortable and could even kill them.

I made my way to a favorite hot spot of mine to observe and photograph this magnificent reptile. This particular area was thick with ferns. Poison Ivy inhabited many of the 2 to 6 foot flat slab rocks, 8 to 10 inches thick that are just right for this elusive snake. The uniform thickness of this size of rocks keep the temperature underneath at a level the snakes seem to enjoy.

The timber rattlesnake, (Crotalus horridus horridus) is the only species of rattlesnake in this section of Pennsylvania. It is found in two color phases, yellow and black; (The phases are permanent.) both have all-black tails.

The yellow phase varies anywhere from a dull yellow to a rich lemon color, and the black phase anywhere from a brownish tint to a very beautiful, velvety black. It is said that yellow phase rattlers are predominantly females and blacks are males, although I have seen a number of black females. Male rattlesnakes can be distinguished from the female by the males longer, thicker tail that houses the reproductive organs.

I have heard people say, "The yellow ones are the meanest" however, I have yet to see a really "mean one" of either color phase unless their escape route is cut off or they are provoked, at which time both can be quite formidable.

After traveling another 50 yards up the steep grade, I was rewarded by the sight of a beautiful black phase timber rattlesnake. The snake, a male, 38 inches long and having nine segments to its rattle, was photographed and released.

Seconds after its release, a buzzing to my right and near a pile of rocks covered by a huckleberry bush broke the silence of the hardwood forest. Then another let loose with an audible display of excitement that is music to a snake hunters ears; just like a bluetick hound bawling treed is to a coonhunter. The sound was 5 yards directly in front of me, but the snake was unseen.

Both snakes were sending warnings but the probability of capturing both was slim. One would seek a quick getaway when I moved in on his or her den mate. I chose the second rattler because there were no bushes, just a rotting oak log. I carefully peered over the log, and there, coiled in a classic striking pose, was an adult yellow phase rattler.

The snake was a fine specimen. Its skin, bright yellow, was apparently created by a recent shedding.

I stretched my snake hook over the mossy old log and gently picked up the now angry viper. The snake was thoroughly enraged so I decided not to measure it. After photographing, it was released near the basking area. Needless to say, the other snake was nowhere to be found. Basking areas are where snakes can get easy access to the warming rays of the sun, usually near the tops of mountains with a southern or southeastern exposure. Since I was not far from my truck and medical attention I didn't mint hunting this area alone, but I never hunt a remote area without a companion.

I have never heard of a timber rattlesnake's fangs penetrating a good pair of leather hiking boots however, I like a little higher protection, affordable snake-proof boots, when in the woods looking for snakes. There are plastic and canvas leggins on the market that afford good protection in snake country. I have used the plastic type in the past but, have found the snake proof boots more to my liking.

Rattlesnakes start their journey back to the den from their summer retreats anywhere from mid-August to early September, depending on the weather. These snakes will sometimes travel over a mile from the den, although it has been my experience to notice many rattlers at dens all summer long.

Rattlesnakes are active in Pennsylvania from mid-April to mid-October, again depending on the weather.

Mating usually takes place in the spring of the year, although recent observations indicate that mating may take place throughout the entire summer. Blacksnakes do not mate with rattlesnakes as some people contend. Although rattlesnakes, copperheads, garter snakes, milksnakes and blacksnakes may share the same winter quarters, that is as far as it goes.

The next place to investigate was the rock ledge on top of the hill — up there I always found something to photograph.

Much to my disappointment the ledge revealed nothing more than several chipmunks running across the rocks as though they had something very important to do.

A check of the time showed 12:30 and time to start back down the hillside. Just as I was about to enter the laurel thicket, I saw it, about 3 inches of the rattlers' dark colored tail stuck out from under the lichen covered flat rock. A quick grab and a tongful of leaves told a disappointing story. Judging from the small tail of the snake, I guessed it to be a young snake probably born the previous year.

There are probably as many theories on the proper method of treating snakebite as there are different brands of fishing rods. I feel the American Red Cross is probably the most accepted method. In any case, when a snakebite is encountered remain calm and seek medical attention immediately.

I ended my day on that mountain and left with pleasant memories and some good photographs. Many times I have gone out all day and haven't seen a trace of a buzztail, so this day I felt quite fortunate.

This denizen of the rocky hillside is slowly being nudged out of its environment due to the ever increasing urbanization of man, therefore it is imperative that we as sportsmen and conservationists keep a close check on this beautiful creature.

The female rattler gives live birth to four to 15 young, 10 to 12 inches in length, usually in September. Totally capable of caring for themselves, these small creatures blend very well into their new surroundings. Their venom is not of the same volume as adults, but what they lack in quantity they make up for in determination. They are usually quite bold and will strike wildly when threatened.

About seven to 10 days after arriving into their new unsure world, they shed. This shedding rids them of the button shaped appendage at the end of their tail called the pre-button, and gives them their first real ornament. This button cannot be heard until the snake sheds again, giving it a segment and a button that can be heard at short distances.

Timber rattlers shed two to five times a year and a segment is added each time. An adult rattler with a button is rare because the rocks that these reptiles inhabit usually break them off. The most segments I have seen on a rattlesnake in its natural surrounding has been 14.

The amount of segments are not a determining factor of age however, short tapered segments indicate a young snake, long tapered segments the older snake, and wide segments of uniform width the old snake.

The timber rattlesnake is an inoffensive serpent that would rather run than fight. If you see a rattler in the wilds, observe at a distance and appreciate the beauty of nature you have just witnessed.

K. Scairs

Two or more rattlesnakes lying together is not uncommon, especially in the spring or fall.

Largest of the three poisonous snakes, the Timber Rattlesnake inhabits the mountainous regions of the State. Rattlesnake populations are feeling the pressure of increased recreational use of mountain terrain.

POISONOUS? ... OR NON-POISONOUS?

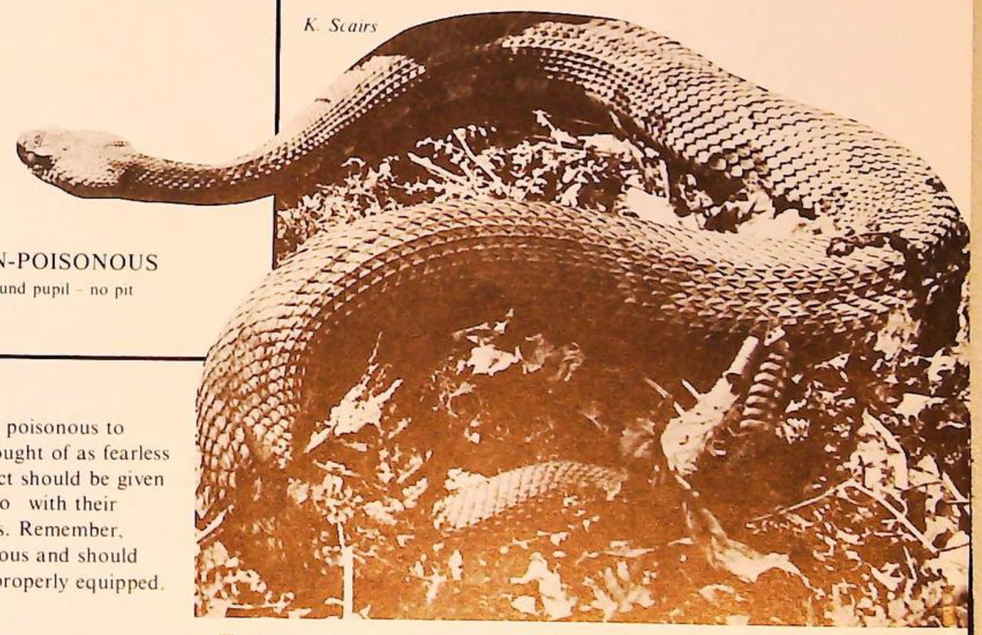
POISONOUS

verticle "slit" pupil with pit behind nostril

NON-POISONOUS

Round pupil – no pit

K. Scairs



The timber ratler is an inoffensive snake that would rather run than fight.

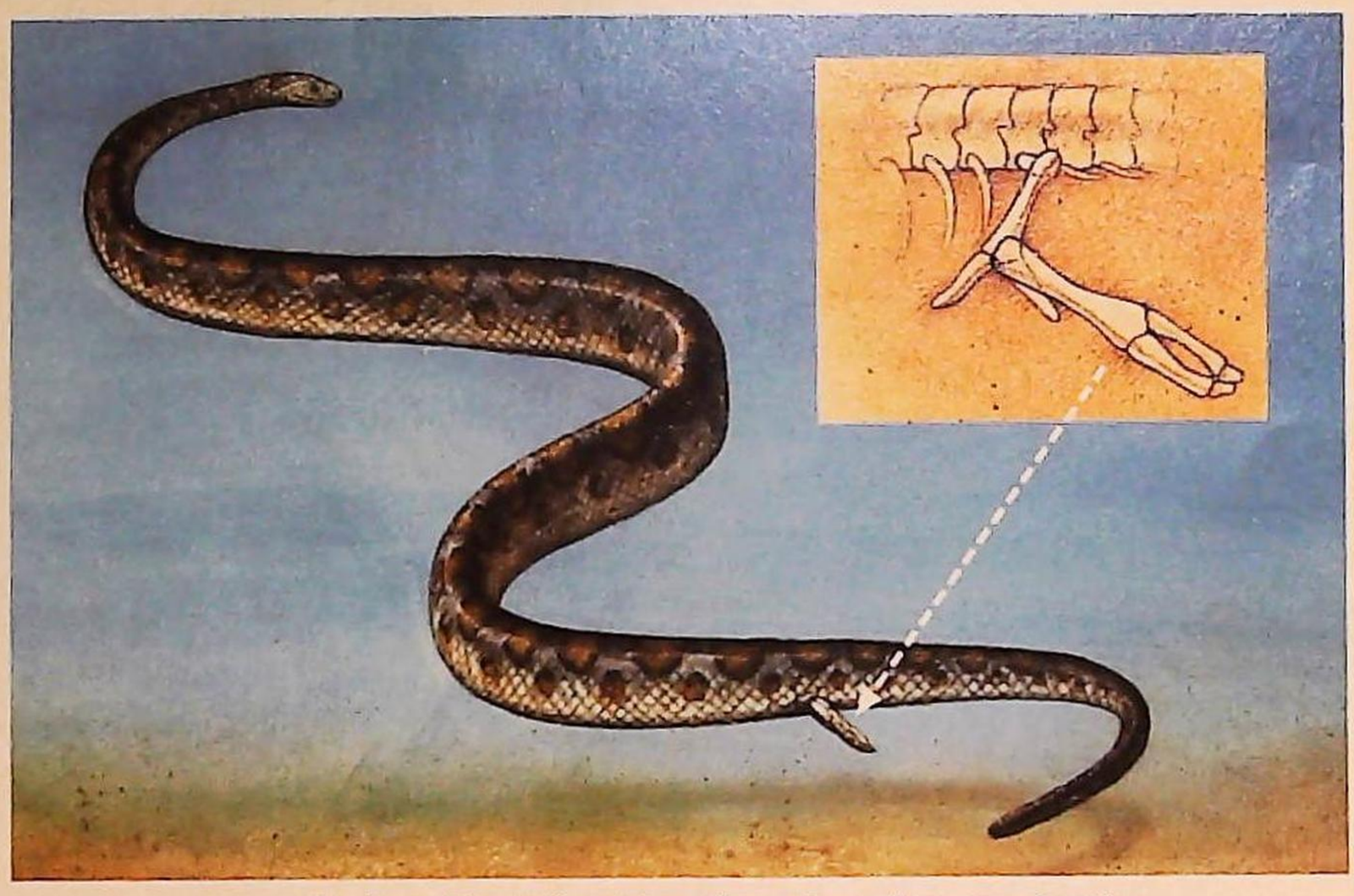
Although rattlers are very poisonous to man they should not be thought of as fearless mankillers, but much respect should be given to them for what they can do with their hypodermic needle-like fangs. Remember, they are potentially dangerous and should be avoided unless you are properly equipped.

How the Snake Lost Its Legs

Snakes, researchers once thought, descended from humble burrowing lizards. New evidence suggests a marine pedigree, and a family tree that includes 45-foot reptiles.

BY CARL ZIMMER

ALL VERTEBRATES THAT LIVE on land—from humans to alligators to birds—are collectively known as tetrapods, meaning "four feet." The name sticks even though the legs to which two of these feet are attached have become arms in humans and wings in birds. In snakes, the change was even more radical: they lost all four of their limbs. One of the few remaining signs of their limbed heritage is the presence of vestigial hips imprisoned in the rib cage.



***Pachyrachis problematicus*: A two-legged ancestral snake.**

How did snakes come to be? The distinctiveness of the animals obscures their ancestry. Their scales, eggs, and subtle features of their skulls show them to be descended from lizards, but it's been difficult to link them to any specific group. Unable to pin them down taxonomically, paleontologists have been able to construct only the flimsiest of scenarios for how snakes lost their limbs. But this confusion may now dissolve, thanks to a 100-million-year-old fossil of a snake with legs.

The three-foot-long creature, *Pachyrachis problematicus* (meaning "problematic thick-ribbed animal"), was discovered in the late 1970s by quarry workers 12 miles north of Jerusalem. After a preliminary study, Hebrew University herpetologist George Haas suggested that while the fossil looked serpentine, there was no evidence that it was closely related to snakes. There matters rested until 1994, when Michael Lee of the University of Sydney in Australia and Michael Caldwell of the Field Museum in Chicago came to Jerusalem to study the fossil more thoroughly. They exposed more of the fossil from its limestone slab and carefully compared its skeleton with those of snakes and lizards. "The first thing you've got to do is look at every possible animal it could be related to, and Haas didn't have access to lots of primitive snake material," says Lee.

He and Caldwell conclude that *Pachyrachis* possesses many characteristics unique to snakes. Its body, for example, is long and sinuous: it has 140 vertebrae in its trunk; most lizards have just 25. And while lizards have open brain-cases, *Pachyrachis*, like snakes, has a completely sealed one. Its jaws are extraordinarily flexible: the lower jaw doesn't fuse at the chin, so the two halves can bend out to the sides to swallow big prey. Many hinges lie along the length of both the upper and lower jaws to expand the gape even more. "They're snakes, no doubt about it," says Lee.

Yet *Pachyrachis* still held on to some primitive bits of anatomy, and in them Lee and Caldwell glimpse the genealogy of snakes. Most obvious, of course, are the legs. The fossil of *Pachyrachis* bears two hind legs, each about an inch long, that lack only feet. It's possible that *Pachyrachis*'s feet were washed away after it died, but Lee suspects they would have been vestigial at best, perhaps with a few toes. Less obvious but just as significant are its hips, which were outside its rib cage rather than within, and a number of diagnostic details of its spine and skull.

Taken together, *Pachyrachis*'s traits point to a surprising animal as the closest relative of snakes: the extinct gigantic marine lizard known as a mosasaur. The two lineages probably diverged at least 110 million years ago. Mosasaurs began as four-legged lizards on land, looking much like the closely related Komodo dragons. Their bodies then elongated and their limbs dwindled as they took to the water. By 100 million years ago mosasaurs were up to 45 feet long and swam by beating their powerful tails and paddlelike legs. Along with the dinosaurs on land, they vanished 65 million years ago, perhaps as a result of the impact of an asteroid or comet.

Lee and Caldwell believe that this kinship with mosasaurs argues against the most popular scenario of snake evolution. Although snakes live today in habitats ranging from trees to deserts to rivers, the most primitive snakes all burrow underground. That fact led researchers to propose that snakes descended from a terrestrial lizard—maybe one resembling a skink—that adapted itself for subter-

ILLUSTRATION BY NENAD JAKESEVIC

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Neces.

red, bright blue and old

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populer shades for parosols.

Greenaway figures appear on

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Batiste and nun's veilings take the

place of the white and tinted mulls of

last summer.

Striped hosiery retains its popularity

in spite of the efforts to render it

unfashionable.

Little girls wear their hair flowing at

the back or arranged in long, loose curls

but banged in front.

An imported English riding-hat is a

felt hat turned up in three corners and

decorated with feathers and a rosette.

Paraffine dissolved in naptha is used

to treat silk and other fabrics, and it is

said that the most delicate hues of

material thus prepared will not be

injured by ice cream or any foreign

substance.

Courtship and Marriage in Germany.

As most gentlemen in Germany derive their income from the Government, which gives them enough for comfort but not for extravagance, their wives are obliged to be very careful in their expenditure, and their economy brought up in strict economy daughters are

Therefore, after a German young lady has left school her real work begins. If she happens to have a great talent for music, everything else is given up, and she devotes all her time and energy to the cultivation of that talent, until she appears as one of the great players of Germany.

If it seems likely she will remain in mediocrity, she is not encouraged in practice, but she then qualifies herself for being a help to her mother by learning cookery, dressmaking, ironing, pickling and preserving vegetables for the winter.

As a rule, German gentlemen do not care for beauty in a wife if not accompanied by more enduring qualities, and they are very cautious in choosing a partner for life.

Before ingratiating himself with the young lady, the gentleman first asks her father's consent to visit at his house. If this is granted, he observes the young lady in domestic relations toward her parents, sisters, brother and servants. If her conduct toward them is irreproachable and he thinks also will make a good wife, he engages himself to her by exchanging rings.

Then begins the wedding time, which is to provide her own wardrobe, furniture, crockery, household necessary for a bride is of Pickford's as a gossips as a Paper.

possible, kill the much-feared serpent. Owing to the foul air they were obliged to move cautiously, but they were resolute lot and pushed on sturdily, through shallow lakes of inky water, over heaps of fallen slate, rock and earth, until they were a mile from the entrance. Then the damp became so bad that they were unable to go further and began retracing their steps, explor-ing the breasts as they went. Suddenly John Mulhearn, a comrade by the clutched his nearest that chilled his hearers: "There it is." They looked and saw glaring out of that cimmerian cavern a pair of blazing eyeballs that moved backward and forward as the serpent swayed within its den. They must have passed within fifty feet of the reptile when they came in, and finding it so unexpectedly on their return, completely enraged, quickly backed their entire party. There they re entered and discharged a volley into the breast in which the python was seen, heard the monster winding its way. When the echoes died away they among the debris in the breast, hissing ponderously as he went, and sending showers of dirt and bits of slate rattling down into the gangway. As they did not care to continue the chase they returned to the entrance, and, as a last resort, they resolved to close all the exits from the old workings, and im-prison the great snake alive. A charge of dynamite did the work for the same power was used successfully on the cave-in holes. This mouth, and the people feel comparatively safe; work was finished before dark yesterday, and the people feel compartively safe; but it will be years before they forget the excitement this wonderful serpent caused.

The Cheerful Goat.

The town goat has the run of the town. He is not domestic in his habits. He is seldom ever seen asleep. When not engaged in butting the breath out of some member of his own family, or peeling the bark off the neighbors' fruit trees, he may be found standing on an empty beer keg, in front of the corner grocery, gleefully chewing wrapping paper and empty sardine boxes. The town goat is respected and feared by all who are acquainted with his eccentricities of character. He is a very reliable animal. He can be relied on to eat a washing, break several windows, and pursue thirty-seven dogs in the adjoin-ing yard all in one day, and not work half the time. Policemen discourage him with stones, and housekeepers empty kettles of hot water on him. As a result of these assaults, he usually has chips and splinters broken off him at every curve and angle of his anatomy, yet withal he is cheerful and frolicsome. His jaunty tail gives him a debonair and rakish ap-pearance that causes some people to surmise that he isn't all that he should be, but they jump to him too hastily, as people of strong prejudices are prone to do.

These remarks about the goat are suggested by an incident that happened last week to an old party named Whitter, who lives in Wisconsin, who owns a goat. Old man Whitter lives on an oatmeal diet and goat's milk, which he obtains from the goat. On Monday last week, Mr. McWhirter, who lives in the same neighborhood, called on Mr. Whitter, and, finding the old man absent, he entered the yard and, feeding the goat some oatmeal, he took a morocco pocket-book from his pocket and put it in the goat's mouth. Why Mr. McWhirter did this is not known, but it is supposed that he had designs on the old man's money. Mr. Whitter missed his pocket-book, and, finding the goat chewing at something, he took it away from him, and found that it was the pocket-book. Mr. McWhirter was taken out and buried.

A MONSTER SNAKE.

The Curious Night Witnessed by a Miner-Hunt in a Colliery.

A Minersville Pennsylvania correspondent of the Philadelphia Times, writes under a late date as follows:

Since Friday last people living in the mining patches in the neighborhood of Mine Hill Gap have been in a fever of excitement over a monster snake that lives in the abandoned working of the old Mayflower Colliery, on Thursday evening the Rev. Alfred R. Rossiter drove wildly up to the Mansion House and declared that while passing Carey's patch, north of the "Gap," he saw a snake between thirty and forty feet long and as thick as the body of an ordinary man winding its way down the mountain stream side, followed by a wriggling mass of small reptiles. The monster moved very leisurely, and stopped every few minutes to raise its head several feet above the ground and utter a peculiar sound. As Mr. Rossiter was on the opposite side of the ravine, and whirring three hundred yards of them, he had an excellent view of the snakes, he snakes disappeared in the black mouth of the Mayflower tunnel, and the astonish-ed witness drove here with all speed to tell his remarkable story. His hearers were inclined to be skeptical at first, but his manner was so earnest that an armed party, headed by Captain Daniel Dorr, went to Carey's patch in search of evidence corroborative of Mr. Rossiter's statement. All their efforts to find when they arrived at the ravine below Carey's patch, and in the mud found the trail of the huge reptile. The trail was a trifle over thirteen inches wide, and the impress in the mud an inch deep. The hunters in the meantime had followed the trail of the serpent up to the mouth of the tunnel, where they held a caucus, and decided to return to Minersville and send to Shenandoah for "Rattlesnake Tom," an old man who has for years earned a liv-ing by killing snakes for their oil.

That night nothing was talked of but the big snake. On Friday morning David William Williams, a miner, saw the serpent come out of a "cave-in" above the mouth of the Mayflower tun-nel and coil itself on a little plateau near by. He says it is about thirty-five feet long, nearly two feet thick and covered with black, red and green scales, each of which is as large and as the palm of a man's hand. Its head is adorned with a yellow crest, and its eyes are large and fiery. When Wil-liams first saw the snake he, for safety, clambered up Sugarman's old breaker, fifty yards away, and from that vantage point looked down on the monster. His head was held erect, and from that he was able to see that its hissing could be heard a quarter of a mile. A few min-utes after the big snake made its ap-pearance a perfect ball of rattlesnakes came rolling out of the tunnel. The strange ball was composed of thirty or forty rattlers, each measuring from three to five feet in length, and so twisted and twined and locked together that it appeared as though they would never be able to separate themselves. They got apart, however, after the snakes had been out of the tunnel for a moment or two, with remarkable celerity and quickly ranged themselves in a twenty-foot cir-cle, in the center of which, with head erect, glaring eyes and rising crest, was the perfect "king snake," as people here call it. The "king snake," which, with its silence which was broken by a rattling effect on the king snake. Its much enlarged, the yel-lowish color of its former and that portion of its body which was swayed to and fro, with the rattling thing was that then left

Invitations

Picnic.

The promenade

on Friday was a fair

The strawberry

festival in progress

Church closed Fri-

Prof. Philip Fa-

lecture last Tues-

hall was crowded

The picnic given

Sparta Club last

Park was an enjoy-

ment.

A picnic was given

No. 1, for the benefit

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[Washington

Self-Care While Nursing the Sick

To those who are about to nurse the sick, it may not be pleasant, not calculated to their present inclinations, to call their attention to the importance of self-preservation, and the necessity of a strict regard to the laws of health, while engaged in the discharge of the duties of the sick-room. Yet, as the life of the nurse is frequently of more importance than that of the patient, it is the duty of the former to see that the latter does not, by any violation of the laws of health, bring on a relapse, or a fatal disease, which may terminate in the death of the nurse, and possibly of other members of the family. Many a nurse has fallen a victim to typhoid fever, or some other disease, caught from the patient, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, the disease might have been avoided. Many a mother has laid down her life for her child, when, by a little care, both might have been saved. Many a wife has fallen a victim to her husband's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, she might have been saved to her family and friends. Many a husband has fallen a victim to his wife's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his family and friends. Many a child has fallen a victim to its parent's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, it might have been saved to its parents and friends. Many a parent has fallen a victim to his child's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his children and friends. Many a friend has fallen a victim to his friend's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his friends and family. Many a stranger has fallen a victim to his fellow-traveler's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-travelers and friends. Many a physician has fallen a victim to his patient's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his patients and friends. Many a minister has fallen a victim to his parishioner's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his parishioners and friends. Many a lawyer has fallen a victim to his client's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his clients and friends. Many a judge has fallen a victim to his prisoner's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his prisoners and friends. Many a jailer has fallen a victim to his prisoner's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his prisoners and friends. Many a soldier has fallen a victim to his fellow-soldier's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-soldiers and friends. Many a sailor has fallen a victim to his fellow-sailor's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-sailors and friends. Many a miner has fallen a victim to his fellow-miner's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-miners and friends. Many a farmer has fallen a victim to his fellow-farmer's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-farmers and friends. Many a mechanic has fallen a victim to his fellow-mechanic's disease, when, by a little attention to the laws of health, he might have been saved to his fellow-mechanics and friends. 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Washington, D.C. 24 June 1882
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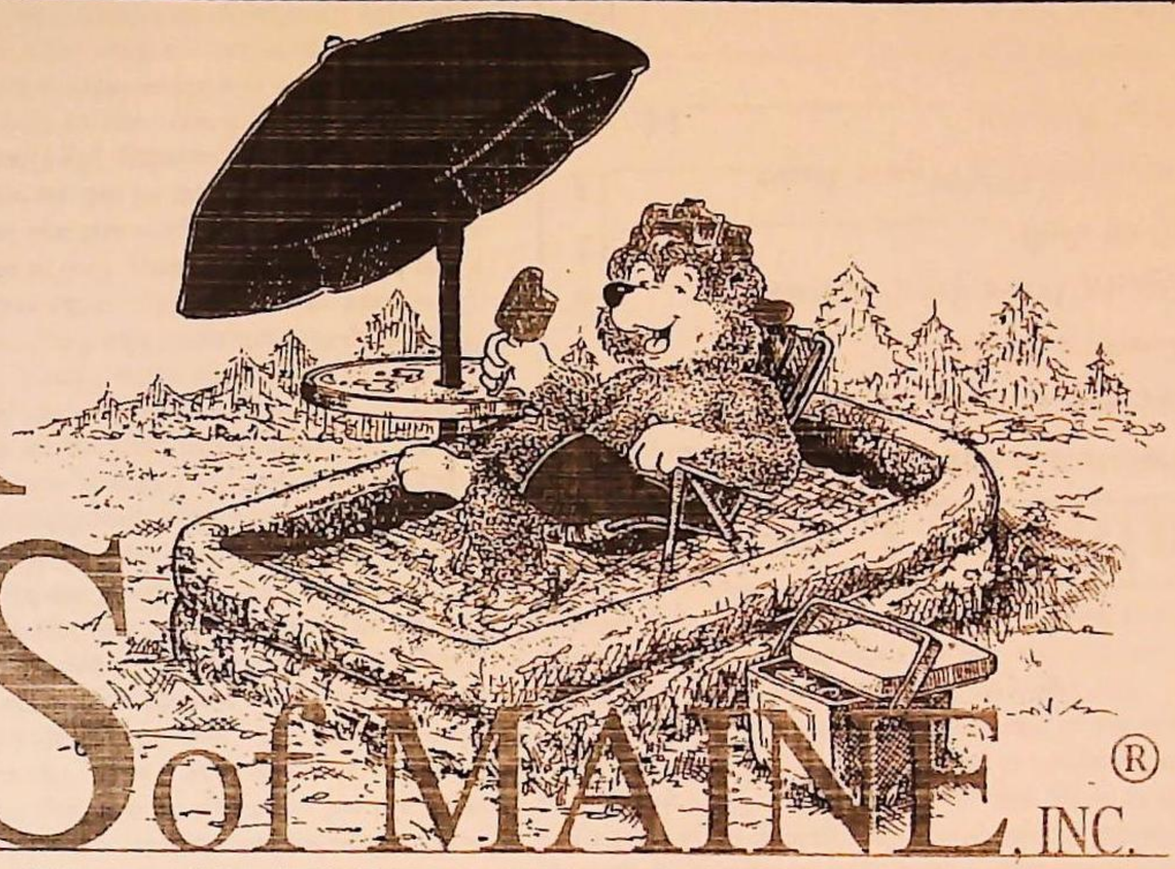

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UNCLE EPH:

SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Agricat Snake in NH? Or a literary/ Social Commentary? Am checking on it.

By 'Digger' Williams

Well boys and girls I guess summer is finally officially here as well actually. It was a hot sticky one the other day. I had a nice place to spend the day. It was cool damp and very comfortable. I cleaned out my well of the accumulated silt. Towards dark I slithered out of the well to be hit by the blast furnace of an evening. You know I just lay there in bed and I can honestly say I never felt hotter.

ice from the snow that had been blown in during the past winter. I generally carried a small bottle of anti-freeze (drinking kind) to ward off the chills. Now it had been close to noon when I went in and I guess I had been in a good two hours slipping and sliding in the silt in the cave, knowing I was the first white man to set foot in that cave for hundreds of years. As I got down, probably a good half mile into the ground I noticed that it was starting to get warmer. If you didn't already know the deeper you go into the earth the warmer it gets cause the center of the earth is

home", and I heard that and was close to wetting these draws. Ducking my head and entering the small cavern I noticed those same tracks all over the sand floor. The walls of this cavern were very warm and even gave off the rosy glow. There curled up around a large bolder, that was red and very warm was the biggest snake I have ever seen. I can tell you what it wasn't. It wasn't like anything I had ever seen while sober or intoxicated. Let me describe him to you: I would guess a total length of over 40 to 50 feet. Big around as a good sized maple tree. A big head the size

damp and very comfortable. I cleaned out my well of the accumulated silt. Towards dark I slithered out of the well to be hit by the blast furnace of an evening. You know I just lay there in bed and I can honestly say I never felt hotter.

Enough of the small talk, let's get down and dirty. I heard that somewhere and I kind -a liked it. Over in Stowe, NH there is a whole bunch of caves. In my younger days, a couple of years ago, I used to like to go exploring. Those caves were just great to take a torch and crawl in on a hot summer day like last week. Yes, I know I never went alone and always told others where we were going. I ain't stupid, you know.

While hunting for blackberries, one hot summer day, I noticed a cool breeze drifting down from the hillside above. This is a sure sign of a cave. This one was one that I had never heard of before and the excitement was just ah booming in me. I went back to the old truck and grabbed a torch and was soon at the place where the cool air was coming from. Parting the bushes that covered the opening I had to crawl on the old fat belly just to get past the mouth. You know it was shaped like a open mouth too. Not wanting to get turned around in that dark hole in the ground I had thought to bring with me a good sized roll of string. As I went in I played out the string. That was a sure bet that I could get out of that cave when I wanted.

The sights to be had in those caves are beyond belief and this one was no difference. It was cold as the dickens in there and there was even a couple of patches of

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knowing I was the first white man to set foot in that cave for hundreds of years. As I got down, probably a good half mile into the ground I noticed that it was starting to get warmer. If you didn't already know the deeper you go into the earth the warmer it gets cause the center of the earth is molten rock and is hot as hell. Some preachers believe that is where hell really is. I ain't never been there and when I do the big swan dive at the end of this life I am in hopes that I will go up not down, don't you know.

I had a great thirst and had been sipping on the contents of my little bottle just to drive the chills away and hopefully to keep the spirit man away cause I weren't ready to go right then. The strangest thing happened just as I rounded a corner. I heard what sounded like music but it had to be the wind. Wind a mile or so in the ground? Not likely. The light of the torch started to reveal the drawings on the cave walls. Beautiful pictures drawn in charcoal and red and yellow ocra. I had seen these before in other caves and the Indians and the Red Paint People that inhabited this area thousands of years before we were put here drew them. It was still getting warmer and deeper we went.

I have to digress here and say that I had gone berry picking with a granddaughter and she was quite a trooper. Twelve years old and not afraid of anything. Now, I was afraid of what was ahead but she wasn't. The deeper we went the warmer it got and I noticed that ahead there was a large room or opening. It was the most beautiful sight all those stalagmites and stalactites and boulders all over the place. The ground under our feet had turned from slimy muck to clean white sand. You know the king you like to walk barefoot through and let it come up between your toes.

We sat down to rest a bit on one of the rocks. It was actually warm to the touch. As I looked around with the torch I noticed a strange writhe marking on the flat ground that reminded me of a snake trail but this was not like that. It was a large trail and no snake I knew of here in Maine or New Hampshire left a trail like that, it was huge.

There were several openings at the end of the cavern and I was just about out of string. One of these appeared to be giving off a warm rosy glow and was inviting exploration. I figured I could get out of this so we picked ourselves up and headed to the opening. My Granddaughter was the first in as my bones were not as spry and I was a little apprehensive, if you know what I mean. From deep in that opening there came a deep voice and I surely knew it wasn't the Granddaughter's voice. "Welcome to my humble and very warm was the biggest snake I have ever seen. I can tell you what it wasn't. It wasn't like anything I had ever seen while sober or intoxicated. Let me describe him to you: I would guess a total length of over 40 to 50 feet. Big around as a good sized maple tree. A big head the size of a Volkswagen. Beady eyes like two red headlights and teeth like those long icicles that form on the roof each winter. The forked tongue darted out every few seconds tasting the air or was it us. Granddaughter was curious but all I wanted to do was get the hell out of there.

Now I have never been a fan of snakes. In fact a few years ago I had a well full of snakes and you know I dug another well rather than clean them out. I hate snakes and this big one was developing a big hate in me. It was with this invitation and the big toothy grin that made me want to leave quick. Some of you may remember the big blob in the first Star Wars. That is a close similarity to what was in that cavern.

I grabbed the Granddaughter and hustled the both of us out of that cave as fast as the feet would allow us to move. I said the hell with the dam string but the trip out was a lot faster then the trip in. At one of the many twists and turns I looked over my shoulder and that big snake was hot on our track. I wouldn't have thought that big lump could move as fast as he did. Granddaughter and I made it our slipping and sliding in the muck at the entrance I dove for the hole and pushed her through first. We were covered with gray slimy clay and as I headed down hill to the truck I looked again and the snake thing was nowhere in sight. Now I ask you was it really there or was it something in the little bottle that I drank?

I went back the next day with a dozen sticks of 30% dynamite and quickly placed it in the crevice at the opening, set fire to the fuse and as I was headed back to the truck there was one big explosion and the cave opening was no more. You know I haven't been caving since that delightful excursion. I don't care if I never see another snake as long as I live. You just have to love it. The Granddaughter went to school out west and has been a cave explorer as a hobby for years. I sure hope she doesn't run into any snake in the grass. I will withhold judgment of any of her boyfriends. If they look like a snake, talk like a snake and want to play games in the grass, I told her to remember the snake in the cavern and run like hell.

See you next issue.

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UNCLE EPH: SNAKE IN THE GRASS - by 'DIGGER' WILLIAMS

The eyewitness story of a primitive struggle between a mother elephant and a giant python that was t ing to swallow her baby

Jungle Dance of Death

By JOHN CARLOW

Vincent Lojingau, a lumber contractor in British Borneo, started out on a quiet little stroll one morning a few weeks ago. Several hours later he was staring at the world's most fantastic wrestling match—a battle to the death between an elephant and a 30-foot python. The prize they were fighting for was a baby elephant which the python had seized and was attempting to swallow.

The scene was a clearing in the dense jungle of northern Borneo, wildest of the East Indies islands. Lojingau, a Portuguese, had set out from his camp near Lungtoi with two Malays and a dog. After wandering several miles through the tangled tropical undergrowth, the men heard the trumpeting of an elephant. The dog then led them to the clearing, where Lojingau was amazed to see the baby elephant struggling in the coils of the python.

The elephant had been flung on its side, bellowing with pain and fright, the long length of the killer snake enfolding it several times. As the python increased the pressure of its death crush, its cruel, elastic jaws gripped the baby elephant's trunk and slowly but steadily began to swallow.

Lojingau wanted to shoot the reptile but the Malays urged him to keep out of the clearing. There might be another python near by, they told him, and in any event one or both of the baby elephant's parents was bound to come pounding onto the scene soon.

The lumberman and the two Malays then climbed trees on the edge of the clearing and settled themselves to watch the next stage of the battle. According to the eyewitness account they later gave to this writer, they had not long to wait.

Within a few minutes, with a roar of rage, the baby elephant's mother came charging into the clearing. She grabbed the python's tail and tried to wrench the reptile clear of the calf. The big elephant's first efforts were too frantic, however, and she failed to get a good grip on the snake's slippery skin.

Her frenzied struggles sent dust and dirt flying and thrashed leaves and branches from nearby bushes. Finally the elephant wrapped her trunk around the python, gave a tremendous heave and sent the calf rolling out of the snake's coils like a great yo-yo.

Enraged, the python backlashed and whipped its tail about the big elephant's trunk, its jaws still grimly holding the calf.

Thus linked to her child, the mother elephant stood for a moment, undecided what to do next.

Apparently figuring that drastic measures were the only way out, she gave another tremendous heave, this time sideways, sending snake and calf whirling.

At the right moment, the elephant jerked back, cracking the snake like a whip and breaking its grip on the baby elephant. The python's sharp fangs raked long, red gashes down the calf's trunk, but the little elephant was flung free, rolling over and over in the dusty arena.

Triumphant and trumpeting, the big elephant wheeled and lashed the snake against a tree. Only slightly stunned, the python viciously writhed downward and coiled itself around the elephant's right front leg, its tail anchored to a tree.

Thus foiled in her attempts to lash the snake to death, the elephant tried to tear it in half by rearing her head and trunk and kicking about with her front legs, sometimes stumbling and going to her knees.

Lojingau, perched in his tree, estimated that this crazy dance of death went on for at least half an hour, the elephant trying to tear or shake the snake loose and the python grimly holding to the big beast's trunk and leg.

At last, apparently tiring of the deadlock, the elephant stood still, breathing heavily. The python at once slipped free and streaked across the ground toward the baby elephant. With unbelievable agility the mother was after the snake and caught it before it could again coil about the calf.

This time the big elephant made no mistake. Viciously she slammed the python against a tree trunk—not once but a dozen times, literally flailing the life out of the reptile. Then, when there was no longer any motion in the snake, the elephant put it down and deliberately pounded the python into the ground with her pile-driver legs. After a while there was nothing left of the snake except a mass of flesh and skin. The titanic battle, which had lasted more than an hour, was over.

As Lojingau watched, the mother elephant, all tenderness now, nursed her baby to his feet. Weak and tottering, still whimpering with fright, the calf lurched slowly off into the jungle, supported by its mother.

Could the python have swallowed the baby elephant?

Professor Michael Tweedie, director of Raffles Museum in Singapore and top authority on the snakes of southeast Asia, thinks not. Although the python is the second largest snake in the world—it is exceeded in size only by the anaconda of South America—the stretch of its jaws is limited.

To Professor Tweedie's knowledge, the largest known object ever swallowed by a python was a Malayan stag, which is about the size of a Jersey cow. And in this case the python swallowed more than it could stomach—the stag's horns pierced the snake's body and killed it. However, pythons have been known to swallow goats, horns and all, without any ill effects.

There are two kinds of python—the so-called reticulated python and the dwarf or Blood Python. The reticulated type is the giant that grows to over 30 feet in length and is capable of crushing a water buffalo to death in its coils.

It is a fearsome but fascinating creature to look at—the middle section is as round as a log, tapering away on each end to a thin head and tail, and the yellowish or brown skin is intricately patterned with mosaic-like designs.

The Blood Python is shorter, averaging seven feet in length, and is rather attractive in a repulsive sort of way. It is brick-red, spotted on the back, with black sides and a distinctive black mark on the head. It feeds chiefly on rats and is highly regarded as a rat-catcher and pet.

More than one tourist has stepped off a ship at Singapore and gone into a mild fit of hysterics at the sight of an Indian watchman calmly strolling by with a Blood Python undulating along at his heels. These snakes are widely used to keep waterfront warehouses free of rats.

According to Professor Tweedie, the python's reputation as a man-killer has been greatly exaggerated. Although this strangler snake is the scourge of the jungle and domestic animals, it will attack a man only if trapped or angered. There is only one known case of a python actually swallowing a human being and that was a 14-year-old boy in Indonesia.

There have, however, been many other cases when pythons have attacked and tried to swallow human beings. In Ceylon a 16-year-old boy accidentally kicked a 25-foot python, which quickly coiled about his legs. The boy seized the snake just below the head, for half an hour, and prevented it from exerting its bone-crushing pressure. Two passing laborers heard the boy's cries and rescued him.

Although the bite of the python is non-poisonous, it often leaves fatal septic wounds. Several British soldiers died from such bites during the early days of the war against Communist guerrillas in the Malayan jungles.

Since then all troops operating in the jungles have been taught, first, how to avoid snakes and, second, how to treat the wounds if they are bitten. Third, the boys are given a course in how to wrestle a python.

According to Captain John Headlam, who conducts this course, any man of reasonable strength can outgrapple even a 30-foot python. The trick, he says, is to grab the jungle strangler just below the head, squeeze hard and keep the tail away from trees.

"Once a python gets its tail anchored to a tree," the captain warns, "it can crush the life out of a horse, let alone a man."

Python skins bring a big price in Singapore and many Malays make a profitable business out of trapping the snakes. The usual, and easiest, method is to catch a wild boar and stake it out near a known python lair. When one of the reptiles appears and swallows the bait, it goes into a coma and is easy to kill or handle.

More daring trappers use a noose attached to a long bamboo pole. The noose is slipped over the python's head and pulled tight. What happens then is a sporting toss-up. Sometimes the trapper battles the snake to a standstill. Just as often, the serpent breaks loose and sends the trapper running for his life.

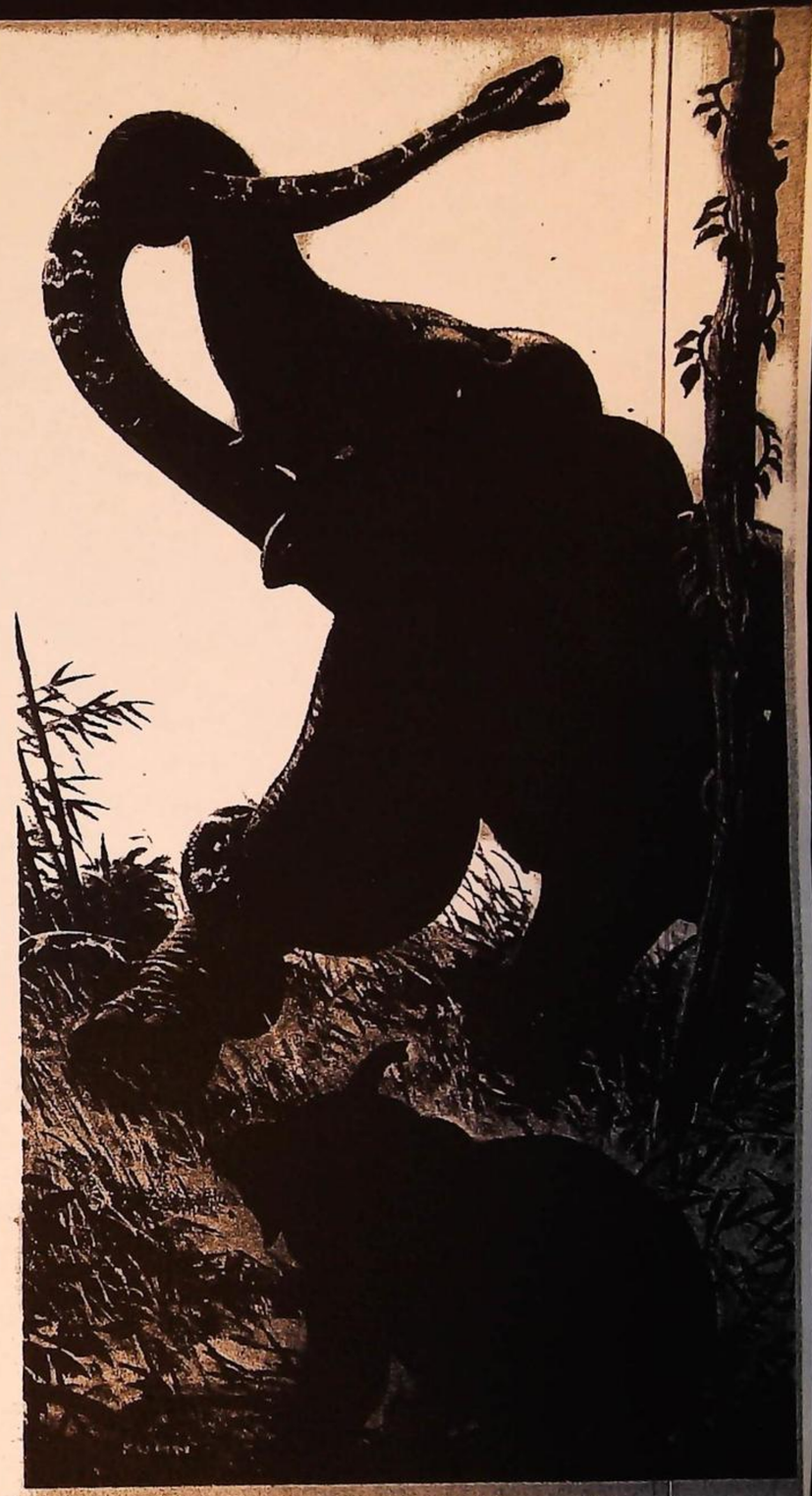
Some snake hunters use a rifle or shotgun, but shooting a python is not as simple as it might seem. You can pump a dozen bullets or a bushel of buckshot into an angry python and still have it come at you. The only sure way to stop it is to blast the head right off—and a python's head is a tiny, tricky target to hit, especially if you're shooting in a hurry.

Although the British seaport colony of Singapore is mainly composed of a big, bustling, up-to-date city, there are still some swampy areas on the island and the serpent-sheltering jungles of Johore are not far away. Consequently snake stories in Singapore are like fish stories in Florida—everybody has a few and some of them are even true. This writer can vouch for the following ones:

Freddie Pope, a Singapore garage owner, was practicing golf shots in his garden one day when he heard his dog howling. Hurrying around the house, he saw the pup in the coils of a python. The snake had its head drawn back, ready to strike at the dog's eyes and blind it. Still carrying a golf club, Freddie promptly whacked the python's head for a birdie.

The Church of England Bishop of Singapore, the Right Reverend H. Baines, was preaching one Sunday morning when a python ambled down the aisle and looked around for a front seat. The Bishop broke off his sermon and signaled the organist to give out with some soft music. An usher then banged the unwelcome guest over the head with the collection box. More indignant than hurt, the snake made for the door, spitting spitefully at the congregation. Nobody hung around to hear the rest of the sermon. ◀◀

ILLUSTRATED BY BOB KUHN



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